

The Pet Show





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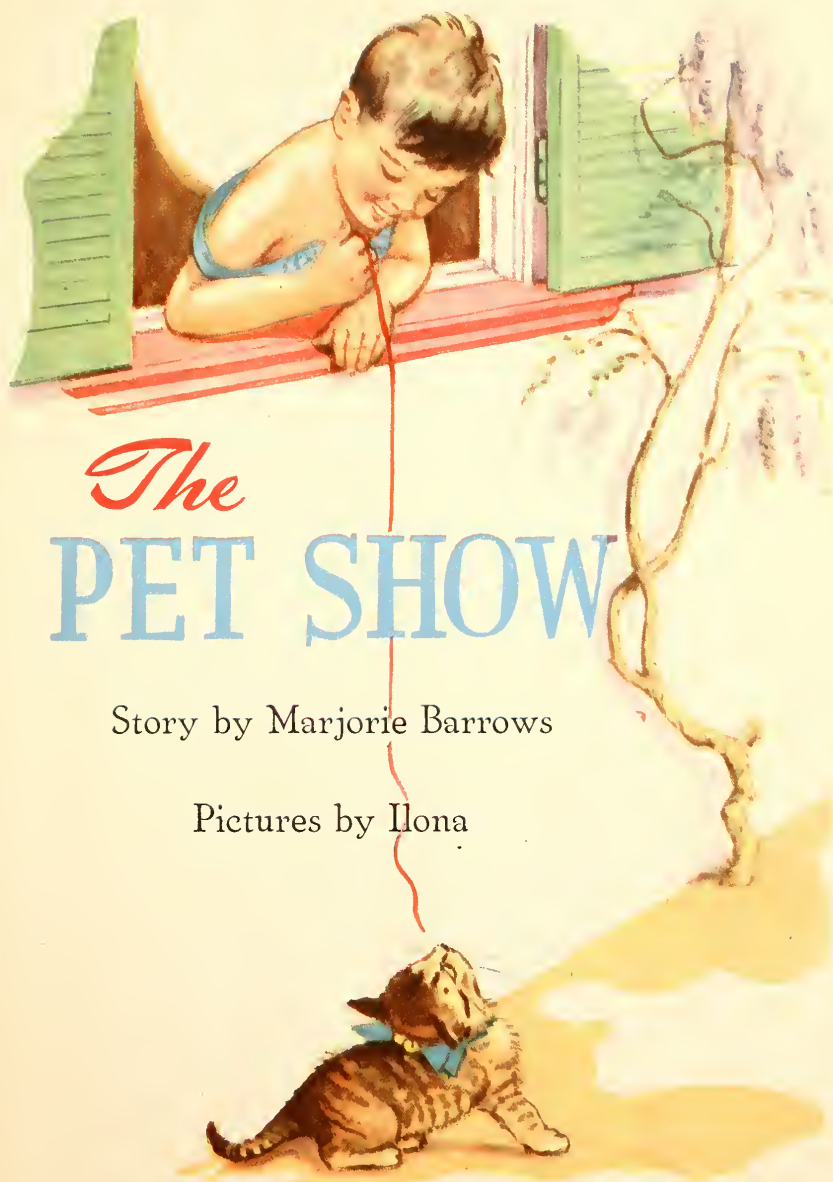
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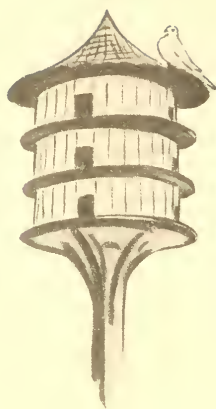
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The PET SHOW

Story by Marjorie Barrows

Pictures by Ilona



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For Annie Jo and Barbara Yates



THE PET SHOW

“Yoo-hoo, Jimmy!” cried Annie Jo, combing Bill Bunny’s whiskers and then hugging him hard. “Are you going to the Pet Show?”



Jimmy dug his shoe into the white dust. "Nope!" he said. "I'm not going."

"Yoo-hoo, Jimmy!" shouted John, trying to tie a green bow to Pat's collar in spite of his barks and wiggles. "Going to the Pet Show?"

Jimmy snapped both the shoulder straps of his blue overalls and he looked the other way.

"Nope!" he said again.

"Yoo-hoo, Jimmy!" called Barbara.





She was holding Toodles, her kitten, who did not like his blue bow with the bells on it. "Do come along with us to the Pet Show even if you *don't* have a pet!" Jimmy tagged



slowly after Barbara and Annie Jo and John. "O. K.," he said gruffly. Oh, how he wished he had a pet, too! A live pet that he could love and cuddle and look after! A pet *he* could take to the Pet Show!



He scuffed his feet in the dusty road. He was so sorry for himself he did not see Pat turn a somersault and try to climb a fence. He did not even hear him bark when Toodles, the kitten, found a red ball.



"I wish I'd get
A little pet,
I wish I'd get
A little pet,"

muttered Jimmy
to himself and he kept repeating it
over and over and over again.

The older children turned a corner and were now out of sight. Jimmy sat down, took off his hot shoes and swallowed hard.

He remembered how Grandpa just this morning had said,

"You're too little to look after a pet." But Jimmy disagreed with him.

"But I'm not!" he retorted, and



tried to lick up two very salty tears. He was glad no one could see them.

“I-wish-I’d-get-a-little-pet,” he said to himself once again.



Hoppity-hoppity-hop!

A brown bunny came skittering
toward him.

Jimmy stared hard at the bunny.

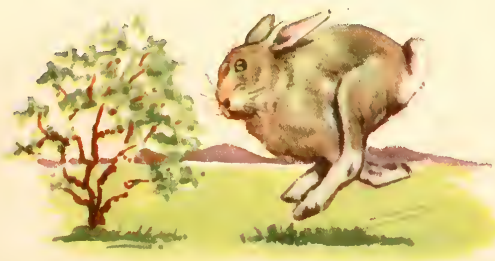
The bunny stared hard at Jimmy. He twitched his nose and wiggled his long furry ears.



Jimmy stretched out his hand. "*There's a pet for me!*" he said out loud. But *hoppity-hoppity-hop!*

"*Neigh-neigh!*" whinnied a pony. Jimmy smiled. "*There's a pet!*"

But *trot-trot-trot!* The pony hurried away.





Jimmy dug his foot into the dust.

“Maybe I can find another pet,” he said. He continued to be hopeful.

“Everyone will have cats and dogs and bunnies. Maybe I can find a pet that’s *different!*”

He looked all around him. A bird lighted in the road close to his tree. The bird was gray and looked rather tame. It pecked up a bug and eyed Jimmy with greedy yellow eyes, appearing to be unconcerned.

But as soon as Jimmy leaned toward it the gray bird gave a



startled cry, ruffled up its wings,
and flew up into a high tree.

Jimmy bent his head in his lap.
He winked back his tears.

Where could he find a pet?

“Chee! Chee! Chee! Chee! Chee!”

Jimmy looked up and blinked at

a bright-eyed squirrel.

She stood there on her hind legs. Her bushy tail switched back and forth as she chattered at him. In her front paws she held a big nut. She had another in her cheek.



"Chee! Chee! Chee!" said the squirrel. She threw the empty nutshell at



Jimmy and scampered up the tree behind him. A beautiful blue and gold butter-



fly lighted on a white daisy nearby and waved her wings at Jimmy. He tried to catch her but she flew away.

“There are pets everywhere,” he thought. “Now there’s a robin I’d



like for mine." But the Mother Robin did not even look his way. She was busy up on her nest, feeding nice plump garden worms to her three hungry babies.

"Oink! Oink! Oink!" cried a voice behind a fence. It was a spotted pig wearing a green ribbon.



Jimmy was sure he was somebody's pet and was going to the Pet Show himself. He gave a big sigh and dabbled his hand in a pond close by. The pig went on its way.

"Maybe I could wade out and catch that green bullfrog," he thought, taking off his shoes again.



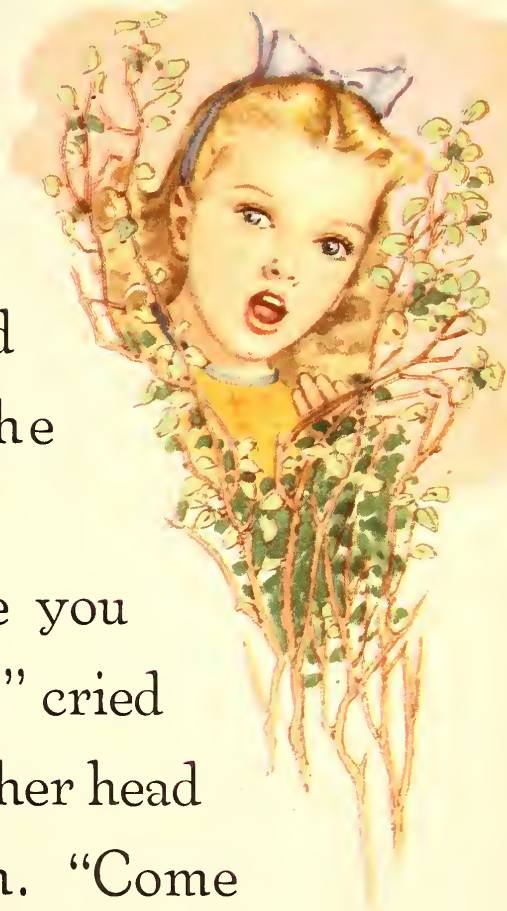
The frog's eyes bulged out with surprise as he watched Jimmy wade toward him. Jimmy carefully lifted up his hand.

"Grrrr-umph!" said the frog, and—*splash*—quick as a blink he dove into the pond.

He dove so suddenly that —*splash*— Jimmy slipped and sat down in the pond, too!

“Jimmy! There you are! We lost you!” cried Barbara, poking her head through a bush. “Come along! The Pet Show is going to start in a few minutes!”

Jimmy watched a yellow chick peeping close beside him.





The chick was hurrying along, too. So Jimmy picked up his shoes and socks and then let Barbara pull him after her.

He was still pretty wet. And he still had no pet for the show!

When they got there, Jimmy was



glad he had decided to come, too.

My, what a noise all the pets made.

The pigs squealed. The kittens
mewed. The donkeys brayed. The
pony whinnied. The parrot
squawked.



All the animals were looking their best. But only a basket of cocker spaniel puppies were polite and kept very still and let Jimmy pet them. They wanted to be friendly. Right next to the puppies was a



goose wearing a doll's hat. She was honking very loudly and she made Jimmy laugh. She looked so funny.

The goose tried to snap Jimmy's



finger. She did not like to be laughed at. Jimmy started to pat a billy goat harnessed to a little red cart.

But the goat said, “A-a-a-a!” and put his head down to butt him. Jimmy jumped aside just in time.



"Baaa!" said a white woolly lamb, jumping up and down. She did not like the daisy wreath she was wearing around her neck.

Jimmy laughed at all the pets. He laughed at the tame toad who wore a dunce cap. He laughed at the baby



alligator, busy snapping up flies.

But he still felt sorry he had no pet of his own. He sat down to pull on his shoes and socks. He swallowed hard. Not for anything would he show the boys and girls how



sorry and sort of lonely he felt.

Just then he felt something hard and queer in the toe of one shoe. He shook it out and a round hard shell dropped to the ground and kicked. A small head with bright eyes poked out of the shell. It was, of all unexpected things, a turtle!

Jimmy gave a shout of laughter and held it up for all the children to see. "*Here's my pet!*" he said.

Everyone crowded around him.

"Isn't it cunning!" said John.



“Where did you get it?” said Annie Jo.

“Isn’t it well behaved!” said Barbara.

“It must have crept into my shoe when I went wading! Think of it, I had a pet all the time.”

“It’s *my* pet, my very own! I’m going to get him a tank, and I’ll call him Peeky!”

The boys and girls all laughed at the way Peeky poked his head in and out of his cozy shell.

They were glad Jimmy had a pet of his own.

And, before Jimmy took his pet home to live in a tank the judges gave him a prize for the best behaved pet! Jimmy smiled and smiled. My, he was proud!

